

KREMLIN'S MINDS GIVEN LOW RATING

British Writer Calls Leaders
Intellectually Third Rate

By PETER GROSE
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—Robert Conquest, a leading British authority on Soviet affairs, has warned a Senate subcommittee that the present Soviet leaders are "intellectually third-rate." He cautioned Western policymakers against assuming that the Kremlin would always react in a rational or coherent fashion.

For nearly two-and-a-half hours Mr. Conquest, author of more than 10 books on Soviet politics, discussed the Soviet leadership with the Senate subcommittee on national security and international operations at a closed hearing that was more like an academic seminar than a legislative exercise.

The subcommittee, part of the Committee on Government Operations, has opened hearings on "problems of international negotiations." The author testified on Dec. 15, and the transcript of the hearing was released by the subcommittee today, Mr. Conquest said.

The particular leadership now in control in Russia derives from a tradition which is alien to both aim and method to our own. But it is also, and this is a major point for us today, intellectually third-rate, even within that tradition."

Leaders' Education Cited

"An unsatisfactory approach to international affairs arises from a largely unconscious assumption that the Communist leaderships are susceptible to more or less the same pressures and maneuvers as our own," he said.

Mr. Conquest cited the researches of Seweryn Bialer, professor of government at Columbia, that many members of the present Central Committee of the Communist party in Moscow had primary schooling education and then higher education, but not secondary education.

"This type of education, with the middle missing, is a usual formula for half-bakedness," Mr. Conquest said.

Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Democrat of Connecticut, who presided at the hearing in the absence of the subcommittee chairman, Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, asked about the implications of the Russian leaders' intellectual incapacity for future negotiating.

Expect Them to 'Blunder'

"The first thing to expect of them is that they will blunder into situations," Mr. Conquest said. "The second thing is that they do not have a clear and single will, nor could they easily break out of their limitations in a given instance even if they wanted to."

"Basically, you can make some things clear to third-rate minds," Mr. Conquest went on. "In every conceivable hypothetical situation, Western policy must be clear to them."

Mr. Conquest's latest book was "The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties," published in 1968 by the Macmillan Company. He argued that the present leadership is what was left over after those purges.

INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

PART 1

WITH
ROBERT CONQUEST

DECEMBER 15, 1969



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INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1969

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

[This hearing was held in executive session and subsequently ordered made public by the chairman of the subcommittee.]

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 3112, New Senate Office Building, Senator Abraham Ribicoff presiding.

Present: Senators Ribicoff, Gurney, and Stevens.

Also present: Senators Allott and Baker.

Staff members present: Dorothy Fosdick, staff director; Richard N. Perle, professional staff member; Judith J. Spahr, chief clerk; and Richard E. Brown, research assistant.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR RIBICOFF

Senator RIBICOFF. The subcommittee will come to order.

We are certainly grateful for your being with us, Mr. Conquest.

Senator Jackson wants me to express his deep regrets. His sister died suddenly this weekend in the State of Washington and he left to attend the funeral. All of us convey our sympathy and regret to Senator Jackson.

This year, under the chairmanship of Senator Jackson, the subcommittee initiated a major inquiry into the process and problems of international negotiation. This is the first hearing in that inquiry.

Clearly, the road to the future is difficult and dangerous, and if the United States hopes to travel it successfully, we must learn how to take advantage of opportunities for negotiation along the way while avoiding the pitfalls and booby traps of the negotiating process.

Clear thinking about this subject is very important. One cannot read the newspapers or listen to TV or radio these days without finding evidence of some dangerous misconceptions about negotiation—especially about negotiation with adversaries.

In approaching this subject, the subcommittee has published this year a number of background documents. One is "The Soviet Approach to Negotiation", and a second, "Peking's Approach to Negotiation". They include a fascinating collection of papers by Westerners, who draw on their experiences in negotiating with Communist governments.

In addition, we issued a publication entitled "Czechoslovakia and the Brezhnev Doctrine", a case study of the tragic plight of Czechoslovakia "negotiating" with Russia the continuing subjugation of her people.

The subcommittee is also encouraging a number of new studies on different aspects of international negotiation. The first of these papers was issued by the subcommittee in October. It is a pioneer analysis of the problems of negotiating scholar exchange programs with the Soviet Union by Professor Robert F. Byrnes and is entitled "Exchanges of Scholars with the Soviet Union: Advantages and Dilemmas".

In undertaking any negotiation, I can think of nothing more essential than an understanding of the attitudes, backgrounds, and practices of the other side. How, for example, can we reach sound judgments in negotiating with the Soviet Union if we are under misapprehensions about what is really going on in the Soviet political world and the nature of the Soviet ruling group?

It is our good fortune to have as our witness today a man who has made the nature of Soviet leadership the special subject of his studies and writings. Noted British author and distinguished analyst of Soviet history and of Soviet political leaders, Robert Conquest is the author of a number of books on the Soviet Union including *Common Sense About Russia* (1960), *The Pasternak Affair* (1961), *Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R.* (1961), *Russia After Khrushchev* (1965), and *The Great Terror* (1968). This latest book is a broad and carefully documented history of Stalin's purge of the thirties and is accepted as the classic work on this period of violence, falsehood, and intrigue.

We welcome Mr. Conquest here today. We shall be happy to have you proceed in your own way.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT CONQUEST

MR. CONQUEST. Gentlemen, it is an honor to be asked to speak to you.

I, too, am sad that Senator Jackson is not present. I wish to associate myself with the remarks about his personal family tragedy.

I hope it won't be thought an impertinence if some of the things I say may seem, by implication at any rate, to be critical of views sometimes found among public men, and commentators on affairs, in the United States as well as in Britain. I am one of those who believe that the interests of our two countries are for all major purposes identical.

I am before you in the capacity of a student of the Soviet Union. In the most general way, I would hold that an unsatisfactory approach to international affairs arises from a largely unconscious assumption that the Communist leaderships are—not indeed of quite the same type as our own—but at any rate susceptible to more or less the same pressures and maneuvers.

In a world of rapid communication and the easy transmission of news an impression is given of greater cultural unity than anyone would have suggested 100 or 500 years ago. Where every political leader wears trousers, it seems to be felt that basic cultural differences cannot exist as they would have been understood to do between a turban-clad Sultan and a periwigged Hanoverian King. It is always tempting for us to take the unconscious assumptions of our own society, absorbed in our upbringing, as natural and universal. The polity created by Stalin and inherited by the present leadership does not have the norms of our own (though in many respects claims to have them, thus further confusing the outside observer).

The Soviet leaders speak, in however debased a form, one of the political dialects of the West. In it they constantly imply that the main

difference between the USA and the USSR is one of social organization. In reality, this has little bearing on the matter—as can perhaps be deduced from the Soviet use of almost identical propaganda criteria in differentiating between the USSR and Yugoslavia as between the USSR and the USA.

The differences, in reality, are at basic levels of civic culture and cannot be understood in terms of “capitalism” and “socialism”. (If it comes to that, the United States, as well as being more capitalist than Russia, is more socialist too, if socialism has anything to do with the idea of society exerting some control over the economy.)

Misunderstanding of the Communist attitudes does not seem to be a matter of “left” or “right” opinion among the Westerners—the Americans—concerned. Some of the mistakes made in Vietnam surely stemmed from the idea that the war could be treated as a sort of military-political chess game, in which the other side could be presumed to be bound to reply in a predictable manner to given moves or escalations on our part. In fact, the Politburo in Hanoi was not, in the sense assumed of it, a rational, predictable chess player.

Our knowledge of Soviet intentions, of Soviet politics, of the balance and the nature of faction within the Politburo at a given moment, is bound to be defective. So we must surely abandon the notion of precise and scientifically analyzed challenges and responses, and return to Bismarck's dictum, “Politics is not an exact science.”

But we do know a great deal about the Russian leadership. And this knowledge is adequate to the construction of a general attitude, of a general policy, towards Russia: At the very least, any policy which ignores what we *do* know is bound to be fallacious. If we are not in the position of being able to read their intentions at a given moment, we nevertheless have a reasonable knowledge of the motivations and attitudes which will go to form those intentions. We are, it may be said, in the position of a general, who naturally does not know his opponent's intentions, but knows the style and traditions of that opponent's army and his personal style of fighting.

(Just as, before Atlanta, when Hood was appointed to succeed Joseph Johnston, General Sherman could not learn Hood's plans but he could and did consult men who had known Hood at West Point and receive perfectly sound answers about his military character—nearly meeting with disaster from failing to realize how sound they were.)

What I would hope to develop is that the Soviet Union is a very strange and idiosyncratic polity, not to be understood or dealt with without a considerable conscious effort. The Soviet leaders are not to be treated as though their motives and conceptions were in our sense natural and rational. The particular leadership now in control in Russia—one which is thoroughly representative of the ruling caste as a whole—derives from a tradition which is alien in both aim and method to our own. But it is also, and this is a major point for us today, intellectually third-rate, even within that tradition.

What I shall say is, give or take a few points, the opinion not merely of myself, but of most students, right, left or center. The facts I shall be citing are fairly readily available to all who look for them. The trouble is, rather, that these facts, and the estimates based on them, do not seem to be continually in the minds of those who form Western policy, or at any rate of those who form Western opinion on policy.

NATURE OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP

Senator RIBICOFF. That is a very provocative statement, Mr. Conquest.

As we go along with the questioning now, anyone around the table should feel free to join in.

Mr. Conquest, you talk about the present Soviet leadership as being a particularly difficult group and inferior to earlier Soviet leaders. What do you think are the reasons for this? What is the nature of the inferiority? How would you explain it?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think this is not a mere accidental thing as may happen in any political system, where good and bad leaders, second-rate and first-rate leaders come and go, where one decade is different from the next for no very deep reason. I think the Soviet situation can be traced to the total background. It is natural to the present moment, to the present time in the Soviet political scene, and any conceivable substitute (for the immediate future at least) will be of the same mediocrity.

Basically, I suppose the answer to your substantive question would be what the German Communist leader Rosa Luxemburg said of Lenin's regime as early as 1918—that the suppression of freedom of speech, of political democracy was fatal. She opposed it not on moral grounds, not that she minded the bourgeois party being suppressed, but because this gradually narrowed political thought itself and took the life out of the whole bureaucracy. She predicted what was to happen.

I think this is a perfectly sound analysis. "Life dies out," were her words, in the ruling group when they don't have free discussion. And discussion narrowed down considerably from her time on.

The present leadership is the first which is the pure product of the Stalin era, you may say. By the early '30s, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was, to all intents and purposes, already an agency of Stalin. His allies and supporters fully controlled it. But between that point and the end of the '30s, the Party was thoroughly massacred. Since my book on the subject, *The Great Terror*, to which you have referred so kindly, came out, we have had figures from various Soviet commentators—not published in the Soviet Union, but the "self-publication stuff" that comes out from various historians and others—which indicate that about half the Party was executed or died in prison during that period.

This included almost the entirety of the leading, second, and third-ranking secretaries of the provinces and everywhere else. To be promoted at that time, you had to have certain specific characteristics. There were official instructions, for example, saying that everybody in the Party should not merely attack so-called enemies of the people, but even the "silent ones", people who were not adequately denunciatory. In fact, at that time you had to be a denouncer and an accomplice in the purge.

This is the actual moment of political birth of most of the current leaders. To take two of them briefly:

In 1935, Kosygin was a foreman in a textile mill, and an active member of the Party in Leningrad. Over the next four years, he rose to become a Minister via being Director of Factory, head of a department in the City Party Committee, and Mayor. At each point his

predecessor had been shot. Of the 150-odd delegates from Leningrad in the 1934 Congress of the Communist Party, none were left to attend the 1939 Congress. They weren't necessarily all shot, but it was a pretty thorough sweep. You rose by participating in the purge. There was no other method of doing it.

Brezhnev had a similar career in the Ukraine.

Brezhnev's first promotion was in 1937, when he was Deputy Mayor, in effect, of a town in the Ukraine. In 1938, he got a further promotion within the Party machine. By 1939, he was Secretary of a City Committee of the Party. In the Ukraine, the situation was then much the same as in Leningrad. Of the local Central Committee of 102 members only three survived this period. The provincial secretaries, of which he became one, were all shot, and all their successors were shot.

I could trace most of the other members of the present Politburo in the same way. Kirilenko, for example, was similarly from the Ukraine and rose in much the same terms.

The point I would like to urge is that while such as Molotov, Khrushchev, and Malenkov had been Stalinists, had joined in the installation of this terror regime with enthusiasm, they were at least not its actual products. The Brezhnevs and Kosygin actually owe the formation of their political lives and characters purely to the events of those days.

It is not just a question of intellectual third-rateness. It is a rather specific character you had to have to rise. You had to be ruthless. I don't mean merely in the sense of cruelty of character, but of a total lack of worry about what happened to your colleagues, being prepared to denounce them for your own promotion and survival.

I might quote a physicist, who was in jail himself, on the point I have just been making.

Dr. Alex Weissberg was involved in Ukrainian industrial development. He is talking about Ukrainian industrialists: but his comment applies to the lower political leadership even more so. He noted that only the third or fourth man kept the average post. The way he puts it is that these eventual beneficiaries of the terror "had not even the normal advantages of youth in their favor, for the choosing had been a very negative one. They were men who denounced others on innumerable occasions . . . They were morally and intellectually crippled."

Senator GURNEY. May I ask a question for background?

What education have these top people, like Kosygin and Brezhnev?

Mr. CONQUEST. They have mostly been to industrial schools, except for two or three of them, who went to party ideological schools. But to develop that one, some research has been done by Professor Bialer at Columbia, and he finds that a very high proportion of the present Central Committee had primary education and higher education but not secondary.

They left out high school. They had primary education, no high school and then college, although the college would normally be an industrial academy or a Party school. In fact, this type of education, with the middle missing, is a usual formula for half-bakedness.

You will recall that throughout this period Party thought has included a very large number of crackpot ideas in, for example, the field of medicine and biology. They have always been—this isn't only the present leadership—susceptible to ideas which may sound all right to the layman but which the sensible layman nevertheless prefers to

leave to the expert to judge, accepting his condemnation of them: the equivalents of phrenology or more lately of flying saucers, with us. One wouldn't find many adherents of such among the Cabinet in the United States.

There were a whole series of crackpots. On doctors alone, Lenin warned Maxim Gorki in 1913, not to go to Bolshevik doctors, but to stick to decent bourgeois ones. "Really, in 99 cases out of a 100, doctor-comrades are asses . . . To try on yourself the discoveries of a Bolshevik—that's terrifying!"

He saw that aura of crackpot which surrounded the sect: but few others were as clear. Throughout the '30s, a series of totally absurd notions—those of Professor Schwartzman and of Dr. Kazakov, for example, were supported in high places, and even discussed actually in the Soviet Cabinet. After the war, you had various similar absurdities—those of Lepeshinskaya, for example. Nor has it stopped since Stalin's death. There was a quack cancer cure being supported by the current Leningrad leadership for years about the beginning of this decade, the so-called "Kachugin method."

And this is to confine ourselves to medicine. Similar things could of course be said about Lysenkoite biology, Marrist linguistics, Zhdanovite aesthetics and so on and so on.

This whole tendency to a specific type of irrationality is based, I think, on the notion that you know it all already. As you are master of Marxism, the super-science, you don't have to be told by a scientist which theory is right within his own discipline. And it is the Central Committee which decides, as you know, in principle, on such matters as biology.

Senator GURNEY. Is it also true that in recent years there is an anti-intellectual atmosphere in Russia? Is that because of a distrust of the intellectuals by these leaders?

Mr. CONQUEST. Yes. Stalin, we are told by several people who knew him, actively enjoyed duping intellectuals, including Western intellectuals. It gave him great pleasure. These people are very much in the Stalin machine's tradition. They do, I think, despise intellectuals. And I think they fear them, too, to some extent, although at present the intellectuals are in a very weak position in Russia.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONDUCT OF U.S. POLICY

Senator RIBICOFF. It is disturbing to hear you speak of the agreement among experts, whether they are left, central, or right, that the Soviet Union is led by a third-rate set of officials operating by a committee process.

What are some of the implications of this in the field of negotiations?

Mr. CONQUEST. I suppose it depends on the particular matter being discussed. It is at the higher policy level that they get themselves into trouble. The Czechoslovak invasion, for example, was blundered into.

I think the first thing to expect of them is that they will blunder into situations. The second thing, I think, is that they do not have a clear and single will. Nor could they easily break out of their limitations in a given instance even if they wanted to, since they are no longer the obvious and natural superiors of the run-of-the-mill of the Central Committee, of the whole of the Soviet ruling apparatus, but rather a projection of it.

Senator RIBICOFF. You speak of the Soviet leadership as third-rate. How do you rate the leadership of the West, whether it is England, France, or the United States? Basically, I am curious how the rest of the world rates the West.

Mr. CONQUEST. That is a very general judgment you ask me to make.

Senator RIBICOFF. You make a judgment as an Englishman about the Soviet Union.

Essentially, the question is: Are there first-rate minds dealing with third-rate minds or are there third-rate minds across the world dealing with one another?

Mr. CONQUEST. Our leaderships may seem to be second-rate, possibly with first-rate ingredients. But I don't think there is any real comparison between the levels. There is in the USSR a narrowness far beyond anything we can imagine. Even the poorer of our leaders, both here and in London—well, are on a different level.

All who have studied, or experienced, the Soviet leadership take this view. Even, for example, the Czechoslovak Communist leaders who were arrested and taken to Moscow in August 1968. They came back saying they had expected the Soviet leaders to be narrow dogmatists, but they hadn't expected them to be "vulgar thugs," I think was the expression used.

Senator RIBICOFF. This becomes fascinating because whether you are dealing with a rogue or not, if smart people are dealing with smart people, you know what the objectives are and what you are trying to achieve. But if you are dealing with third-rate minds, what happens in the negotiating process on big decisions and objectives? How do you negotiate broad policy matters with third-rate minds?

Mr. CONQUEST. I would have said basically you can make some things clear to third-rate minds. At any rate, in principle, it seems especially important, as far as possible, to make one's position absolutely clear beyond all doubt—and in good time too.

In the Cuban confrontation you had 10 days or so to let it be known what American policy was and the then Soviet leadership was slightly superior to the present one. But what happens if you have a crisis that boils up very, very suddenly, a life-or-death crisis, say in the Middle East?

I think the answer (easy to say but far less easy to effect) is that in every conceivable hypothetical situation, or anyhow in the main hypothetical situations, Western policy must be clear, and clear to *them*, if not in every conceivable detail at least on every major point.

Senator GURNEY. Western policy should be very simple and positive so that they get the message?

Mr. CONQUEST. Very clear; yes.

Senator BAKER. May I ask a question, please?

I don't think anybody would quarrel with the idea that America's or anyone's policy ought to be clear and fairly simple, in very general outlines. But I am wondering if that is shorthand for saying that it ought to be unified and of one voice.

Doesn't this theory require that there not be apparent division within the governing authority of a nation on what that posture ought to be, what the policy of the nation ought to be? I am wondering, then, projecting it one step further, if that isn't virtually impossible.

Mr. CONQUEST. This is the problem of democracies in general, isn't it?

Senator BAKER. Yes. So, how do you manage to have a central, clearly defined, unmistakable foreign policy in a democratic system?

Mr. CONQUEST. The Executive has to cope with any immediate crisis, I take it? But what I noticed, for example, about the Hungarian crisis in 1956 was that the West seemed to have no contingency planning at all.

I do agree that you can't be as clear-cut as perhaps I was seeming to suggest. But I am not really wishing to specify policies so much as to characterize the Soviet component in the situations which policies are framed to deal with.

Senator BAKER. I don't intend to impose on you to extend beyond the parameters that you have outlined. However, I think, underlying this little colloquy is the presupposition that we must attribute to the Soviet Union a fairly high level of political sophistication and intellectual capacity in order to afford the luxury of diversity which is essential in a representative democracy. If we can't assume that they have a fairly high intellectual capacity, and if we can't assume that they are fairly sophisticated in their understanding of foreign affairs, then there is a question of whether or not we can afford the luxury of democratic diversity in foreign policy.

That creates a dilemma that none of us are anxious to cope with, but it is implicit in the conversation.

Mr. CONQUEST. I think you are right. I think it raises immense difficulties.

It is politically impossible in a democracy to have a totally unified attitude in foreign policy. I would have thought that vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, it would have been possible to have enough consensus. It isn't a matter of 100 percent. It is a matter of avoiding giving the appearance of faction which they might feel would play into their hands, while retaining the right and power to criticize and suggest. I would feel the important thing to be as clear a definition of policy as possible *prior* to any crisis, and a certainty that the Executive will pursue that policy in any particular crisis. Dissent, or useful and constructive dissent, surely comes best in debates on the formulation of policy in comparatively uncritical interludes. In an actual crisis it is less constructive.

You had that in Cuba, to some extent. There were voices, quite loud ones, to President Kennedy to climb down. If the Executive copes with a crisis, and does it right, afterwards no one is going to complain.

Senator BAKER. Just to make sure I am on record correctly, what I am trying to do is point out that the level of competence and political understanding and sophistication of the Soviet leadership is directly and vitally related to the democratic process in the United States as it bears on foreign policy; and, therefore, the apparent quality of Soviet leadership that you describe, as well as their apparent lack of political sophistication in this field, makes an infinitely more difficult job for us in the conduct of United States foreign policy.

Mr. CONQUEST. Yes; absolutely.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.-U.S.S.R. NEGOTIATIONS

Senator RIBICOFF. What are the implications of what you have said for two big sets of negotiations now going on—for the future progress of negotiations on Vietnam and the Middle East?

As far as the United States is concerned, in addition to the arms control negotiations, including the SALT talks in Helsinki, there are the two big issues, Vietnam and the Middle East, where we are working with Communist governments to try to get successful negotiations.

What are the implications of what you have said for these negotiations?

Mr. CONQUEST. First of all, at the present, (and this applies to the Helsinki negotiations, of course), it is clear enough that they have themselves in the position of having enemies on all fronts all around the world—both China and the West. The whole Helsinki thing, I am sure, can be looked on as a cooling down of the Western Front, as it were. That is natural enough. But how far are they prepared to go in real negotiations? Are they ready to take their apparent wish for détente to any logical conclusion?

The Soviet Union's attitude to Vietnam—or so it seems to me—has always been conditioned by their attitude to China and they don't basically care very much about Vietnam, as such. (This is not new to you, I am sure.) The idea of making the North Vietnamese Army dependent on modern arms is a reflection of the attempt to build up a pro-Soviet faction among those Chinese soldiery who advocate modern, fully equipped, Russian supplied armies, as against the Maoists now in control, who talk in terms of guerrilla warfare and retiring to the interior, that type of thing.

On the Middle East—and in the whole business of having fleets cruising around the Indian Ocean and so on—they have let themselves get into an area beyond the real interests of Russia in much the same way, you may say, as William II, ignoring Bismarck's advice not to bother about Africa, got himself into naval adventures and colonial adventures which were of no use to Germany, and simply extended her into provoking everybody everywhere.

This is, I would say, due to the combination of two things. One is general thoughtlessness and swagger, like the Kaiser's "place in the sun." They seem to think in terms of "we are a great power so whatever great powers have or do we must have or do."

Secondly, I would have thought it reflected divided counsel. Somebody among the leaders wants a blue water fleet. Somebody wants a more forward policy in the Mediterranean. Others, with other preoccupations, let him have his fleet, his intervention—at least, until trouble arises. This, at least to some extent, can be documented.

At the time of the last Israel War, there were open signs of division in the Soviet leadership, and the then Secretary of the Moscow Committee made a speech urging a much tougher policy, in effect. Afterwards, recriminations came and he was finally thrown out of his job. Nevertheless, it indicated that a faction had been trying to drag them in a bit further.

There is always debate, of course, and wings develop, and separate interests in these essentially military or semi-military types of foreign political maneuver. I don't know if you read the Penkovsky papers. He gives his account of the meetings of the Soviet Defense Committee. Even in Khrushchev's time, when there was an established senior leader, there was considerable chaos when he wasn't there, with Kozlov or somebody chairing, the generals and political men concerned with

defense used to leave the committees not knowing what had been decided—different decisions every time.

And when you have a leadership which isn't as united as it was then, it seems very probable indeed that they simply bungle into things at a minor level. And then, all too often, the minor level decisions can commit them gradually and accidentally into major areas.

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Senator ALLOTT. I would like to ask a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman.

Following up on your discussion of the intellectual level of the Soviet leadership, do you regard the decisions made by the Soviets at the time of their Czechoslovak invasion as ones made in an atmosphere of virtual hysteria?

Mr. CONQUEST. You wouldn't call Hitler or Ribbentrop great intellectuals, but if you compare their invasion in 1939, which was thought to be crude at the time, it went, politically speaking, with considerable smoothness and satisfactory planning. They got the President to sign away his rights. (They had to chase him around the table, but they got him to sign.) The Czech Government handed over formally and correctly to the German representatives. A few tanks went through Prague. They even managed to get a sort of Slovak rising in Bratislava—something the Russians seem to have wanted but failed in. There was none of this complete bungling on the spot. I don't think it was because Hitler was more intellectual; and Ribbentrop wasn't a great intellectual either.

Senator ALLOTT. There were stories from one source and another which indicated that there was, in fact, in the Russian hierarchy, a group of people who panicked at this time with the idea that Czechoslovakia actually was getting away from them as a satellite. This view precipitated the carrying out of what were well-laid military plans.

Militarily, the Soviet plans were smooth, they were quiet, they were effective.

Mr. CONQUEST. Yes, on the whole.

Senator ALLOTT. Maybe you don't think this element of panic was significant in their decision.

Mr. CONQUEST. I think from their point of view the invasion was their only way out. Assuming their own interests, the invasion was a logical thing to do. It is rather that they let the situation get to this stage. It didn't have to reach this stage. It was the bungling and then this gave the air of having been done in—well, panic perhaps isn't quite the word.

Senator ALLOTT. Perhaps it is a strong word.

Mr. CONQUEST. It was something like, "We must act now or else."

It was certainly one of the great examples of this extraordinary lack of political sense in foreign affairs.

I would like to read in, if I can, a remark by a very left-wing commentator in England on this point—writing not immediately after the invasion but in the *New Statesman* of the 25th of April 1969. K. S. Karol, a very left-wing man, even by *New Statesman* standards, says, "Stalin's heirs have shown themselves completely incapable of carrying on either his mission or his methods. They have forgotten all he previously taught them on the art of dividing the opposition or of

dressing up every action in plausible doctrinal robes. In a word, they are completely ignorant of politics, incapable of deceiving even the citizens of their own country."

He develops that at some length.

Senator RIBICOFF. Do you think the people of the Soviet Union are aware of the bungling nature of their leadership?

Mr. CONQUEST. I suppose the answer to that is it depends on what one means by people.

Senator RIBICOFF. The general feeling, the population, the population as a whole. Do they sense this bungling character?

Mr. CONQUEST. I should say yes in a general way. Well, they know that their leaders have now got Russia into the position of having the West against them *and* China, and everybody; even the Western Communist Parties are attacking them.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNIST ATTITUDES

Senator ALLOTT. Just one other question.

I note your sentence, "In fact, the Politburo in Hanoi was not, in the sense assumed of it, a rational, predictable chess player." In view of what has happened in that area, historically, it seems to me that it has been a predictable chess player.

Mr. CONQUEST. My "predictable" was a criticism of the predictors. I would say that a lot of the escalation-and-response stuff makes this false assumption about the other man. You can't assume he is going to reply according to your rules if you check his king. He may kick you on the shins under the table. That is his rule. He does not play the same game.

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND DISSENT

Senator STEVENS. Mr. Conquest, perhaps naively I have been assuming that the coming generations in Russia have been enjoying more and more intellectual freedom. This is the impression I have gotten, I guess, from the news media.

Is this incorrect?

Mr. CONQUEST. It was a wavy graph—up and down—until about 1966. It is becoming increasingly difficult and increasingly more Party controlled. For example, in 1963 under Khrushchev, Solzhenitsyn was able to publish his great labor camp book *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. But he hasn't been able to publish anything in the last year or two, and is now in very serious trouble.

Senator STEVENS. We have had some Alaskans going across to Moscow. They have visited me and left me the impression that there was a great deal more freedom in the eastern part of the country, in Siberia, than there is in the Moscow area. One of the things they comment on is that the many young people there are brighter; they are quicker. They want to visit; they want to be involved.

Is this a false impression they are coming back with?

Mr. CONQUEST. In a very general sense, I think it is true of some of the young people—in the sense of the young educated people.

Senator STEVENS. These are young engineers, scientists.

Mr. CONQUEST. Scientists in particular are showing a great amount of revulsion. Not all of them, of course, but many certainly are. But neither they, nor the young, at present (and for the foreseeable future

I should imagine) have any political influence at all on the decisions taken, on politics.

Senator STEVENS. Would you distinguish between the older and the younger members of the present ruling group in Russia in their relation to the Stalin purge era?

Mr. CONQUEST. The older ones were, in effect, products and minor accomplices of the terror. As to the younger, one usually hears Shelepin taken as an example, since he only came into politics at all, and started rising in the Party, about 1940, after the height of the terror was over. He worked his way up through the Young Communist League, and was appointed head of that body by Stalin in 1952—a pretty bad period, and the Young Communist League at this time, it was officially said under Khrushchev, was largely a sort of agency of the police, at that political level.

I would say, to get to the present-day young people considered politically, that the difficulty is that the young man who rises in politics is, in Russia, even at the University, not the bright young scientist. He is the person who becomes secretary of the Young Communist League group or the Party group. He is selected, obviously, as an ideological conformist or trusty on the one hand, and man of political ambition within the machine, on the other.

The idea one gets from the people who go to the Russian universities is that these young secretaries are disliked and feared perhaps even more than their superiors. They are the representatives of the old tradition, and they crush, denounce and everything as in the old days. They don't shoot people, but the principle of "I will ruin you" is still there.

Senator STEVENS. What is the threat today in Russia if there is no liquidation concept? Is it correct that political dissidents are no longer being sent to Siberia? What is the threat to keep down those who would be the outspoken opponents of the current regime?

Mr. CONQUEST. The labor camps are not by any means empty. Estimates are very difficult to come by. I hesitate to make one. Russians talk in terms of anything from about 200,000 political prisoners up, which is quite large. One often hears higher figures.

They do imprison them. There are a lot of cases of Ukrainians, writers, people who are in prison, like Sinyavski, Marchenko. And they do send people to Siberian exile as well, like Pavel Litvinov. But even if they don't go that far, they fire them from their jobs.

There was a case of a young woman teacher which came up the other day in one of the Soviet papers. All she did, as I recall, was go to the court where some of the writers were being tried. She was simply fired from her job and expelled from the teachers' union.

Senator RIBICOFF. What happens with a person like that who gets fired from a job? Can they get another job, or how do they live?

Mr. CONQUEST. They are not actually forbidden from getting other jobs but they are harassed. It is more like the Czechoslovak runner, Zatopek. You saw him getting jobs as a dustman or something.

Senator RIBICOFF. If one is a school teacher and gets fired, then she gets to be a cleaning woman or to do some menial job?

Mr. CONQUEST. This depends on the courage and good will of somebody one knows, basically, or if one moves somewhere where he is not known.

Larisa Daniel, the wife of the writer, is now in Siberia as a free exile. I can't remember her precise specialty, but it is an academic one. They needed it there and she was accepted but the police stepped in. She lives on a menial job now.

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND FOREIGN POLICY

Senator STEVENS. Do you see that there is anything we might do—and I don't mean we as a Congress but as a country—to have an impact upon this trend that I gather you believe exists—namely, the declining competency of the Russian leaders? Could we, for instance, by stimulating some sort of an exchange program or of trying to find some greater ways to, say, open the door to intellectual freedom there, have an impact on this situation? Or should we keep our hands off of it?

Mr. CONQUEST. I suppose in a general way the Western policy, being firm but not provocative, eventually weakens them. I would agree that, on the whole, exchange is useful, but not that it much affects anything politically, at the leadership level. Their dogmatism against our views is virtually total.

Malenkov and Molotov, Khrushchev and people, the *last* generation of leaders, were men who had been at the top for 20 years, 10 to 20 years. They had a reputation of their own, among the Party. They were greatly senior to and prestigious among the Central Committee. They were big men in their way.

There are now many members of the Central Committee who are of equal seniority and equal competence with the leaders. These leaders are, you might say, just ectoplasm of the apparatus. In any political system, in foreign affairs particularly, the leaders should not be people who try to put into effect the grass roots fanaticisms of their political party. You can't really conduct, let's say in England, a foreign policy which your true, hard-working, conservative militant would regard as a real Conservative policy, and it is the same with Labor. The leader gets around this in part because he has the support of the voter. He doesn't depend simply upon the party militant, the party organizer, the party fanatic.

Well, in Russia they haven't got the voter, the man below. The effect of this can be seen, I think, in Russia even before the present people, because in turn, Beria, when he had his moment of power in 1953, and Malenkov in his period, and, again, Khrushchev in 1963-1964, were making serious attempts to solve the German problem—in Beria's case, perhaps even to the extent of dissolving the whole Ulbricht regime. But they couldn't get away with sensible maneuvers because the men below them in each case were opposed on dogmatic grounds. And in each case it was one of the main reasons for their fall.

Nowadays, you have people who are not of sufficient seniority, or detachment even to try to conduct a reasonable foreign policy. They will conduct a policy suited to the mind of the apparatus.

POSITION OF THE MILITARY IN RUSSIA

Senator STEVENS. To what extent does the military figure into this? I have the impression that the people you just mentioned had very deep roots in the military, to begin with. Is this present ruling group in Russia as wedded to the military group, and vice versa, as in the days of Stalin and Khrushchev?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think we have to be careful about being dogmatic about the position of the military in Russia at the moment. There has only been one occasion on which the Army, as such, pretty nearly came to play an important political role. That was when they had the faction fighting in 1956-1957 and Khrushchev brought Marshal Zhukov into the Presidium. Zhukov was certainly putting himself forward as a political figure based on the Army, and getting the Army to some extent out of political control. That was an exceptional case. Above all, he was a man of enormous repute in the country as well as the Army. But he failed. He was crushed after a few months of this. I would say that the impression I think almost all students form, is that the military now will give advice on strategic issues—which naturally has certain political implications—but nevertheless when it comes to decisions the leading Party men are totally in control.

Their man at the head of the Political Department of the Army, Yepishev, was Deputy Minister for State Security under Stalin, Deputy Head of the Secret Police, and they have now brought in one or two of Stalin's old incompetent but Stalinist generals.

My strong feeling would be that political decisions are the ones which count and the military plays a very little role, except to the extent that a few of the marshals are members of the Central Committee and are allowed to speak as Communists—but they are also by the same token under Party discipline.

THE QUESTION OF EASTERN EUROPE

Senator GURNEY. Let's go back to the Czechoslovakian case. In terms of Soviet European policy, and perhaps even in terms of Soviet world policy, that was the epitome of this present regime. We ought to be able to learn a lesson from that.

My question is really two-fold: I take it that you think this was a political disaster on the part of the Russian leadership because it alienated the Czechoslovakian nation. I suppose the Russians now are really a sort of occupying force rather than a cooperative force in Czechoslovakia.

If that is the case, what effect does this have on other European satellite countries, and how can we exploit it?

Mr. CONQUEST. That is a very good question.

The how to exploit it is a thing I have been wondering about for 10 years. I think we can certainly take it that there is a continuous and permanent force at work, all the vital forces in the populations, and even in the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe tend away from the Soviet Union. This has been happening since Stalin's death, since the absolute, total control went. There are bound to be further crises.

I don't know what advice I could think of giving to the West in a case like the recent Czechoslovak one.

Senator GURNEY. What do you think the Czechoslovakian invasion and what has happened since meant to other satellite countries? How do they feel about the Russian leadership?

Mr. CONQUEST. Some of their leaderships clearly prefer the Russians to losing power. Others, like in Bulgaria, for example, are virtually agencies of the Russians, a small clique even within the Party, supported by the Russians.

Senator GURNEY. In other words, in that nation the Czechoslovakian invasion has not really affected the relationships between the Bulgarian Government and the Soviet Government; is that correct?

Mr. CONQUEST. I would say it has affected them in the sense that it is a very severe warning to anybody who is attempting to move away. You are doomed before you start, unless you can think of another way of doing it. On the other hand, in Rumania, the lesson they seem to have learned, rightly or wrongly, is, if you fight you have a better chance. In effect, the Rumanian signals seem to me to be, "Don't try anything or we will resist", which may not be a super-deterrent but it is some deterrent. At the same time, they have cooled down quite a bit some of the tendencies to liberalism.

Senator GURNEY. What about Poland?

Mr. CONQUEST. The Polish Government is the strongest accomplice of the Russians at the present time. It again raises all these questions about what to do in foreign policy because we rightly gave important loans and so on to them in 1956-57, and this appeared to be a reasonable and correct policy. But, in fact, the regime simply evolved into being one of the strongest accomplices of the Soviet Union.

Senator GURNEY. What about the peoples, themselves? We get the impression, I think, in this country, so far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, that the general population has had it with the Russians and are doing everything they can to indicate resistance, without being liquidated, by slowing up in their work activity, and so on. Is this correct?

Mr. CONQUEST. Certainly, it is correct.

Senator GURNEY. What about peoples in other satellite countries? Do they show this kind of resistance openly—a repugnance to the Soviet leadership?

Mr. CONQUEST. Not openly in the same sense. They haven't had a recent provocation in quite the same way. But in principle, given the chance, I would say this is the basic feeling. Of course, it is more than that. There is a great degree of national feeling *within* the Soviet Union in certain areas, in the Ukraine, in the Baltic States. When one says that the intellectuals in Russia have had very little effect, just a few hundred writers and scientists, this is not quite the same in the Ukraine. People who are being arrested, who have been arrested, in the last year or two, have included actual members of the Party machine, not important ones but still people within the local establishment.

The Soviet leaders have not handled their nationality problem. They have not coped with it. And, of course, you have all of these things like the Crimean Tartars, where they don't seem to know what to do about them.

Senator GURNEY. With reference again to the satellite countries and the problem of the West exploiting the unrest, what can we do about that? Have you any ideas at all?

Mr. CONQUEST. This is sort of a major policy decision, isn't it?

We talk in terms of rollback, containment and so on. I would say certainly containment in a general sense, even if it is an unfashionable word, is a sound policy and has worked. This is part of drawing the line as best you can and making your position clear. The line in Europe is clear and I think is accepted by people representing the full spectrum—left, right and center. You don't have much discussion about the NATO frontier in Europe, anyway.

Senator GURNEY. Of course, that opens a whole can of worms because our own country is getting a little restive about our role in sharing the containment, and also about the role and share of the NATO countries.

Mr. CONQUEST. I know. This is a problem. But that is really not from my side.

Senator GURNEY. No.

Mr. CONQUEST. If you say how do we exploit it, this already contains an answer, that we want to exploit it. That raises the question of what does one do in the Czech situation.

Senator GURNEY. I was going to say, let's start with Czechoslovakia first.

What should we do, and I mean now, to exploit this?

Mr. CONQUEST. I would say it is more a question of having some contingency planning of some sort for hitherto nonexistent events in Eastern Europe.

After all, when one says peace can be maintained on the basis of drawing the line, if there is a major collapse in Eastern Europe, or if the Soviet Union itself collapses, which some commentators think is quite possible, some policy different from mere watching seems unavoidable. If we think in terms of the 1956 Hungarian situation, even, without trying to lay down policy, I do feel that we should have had a diplomatic initiative ready, say an offer of neutralizing part of Central Europe, something like that—any diplomatic initiative would have been better than none—even if it had merely confused the Russian leadership long enough for the Hungarian Revolution to jell, as it were. But no diplomatic initiative of any sort came. I know that was largely the fault of the simultaneous British involvement at Suez. But *some* diplomatic initiative might have been undertaken.

Senator RIBICOFF. Wouldn't that be a cruel thing to do, to give the people the idea that we were going to do something, when Hungary and Czechoslovakia indicate that, in fact, we can't do anything and won't do anything?

Basically, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Eastern Europe are within the immediate sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, just like Cuba was in the immediate sphere of United States influence. Khrushchev backed down when he came to the confrontation.

Wouldn't the United States back down in a confrontation over Eastern Europe? It would become very obvious that the United States was not going to send troops to Hungary. If we misled those people by saying, "Yes; we would be with you", the slaughter would be fantastic. Have we a right to do that to people?

Mr. CONQUEST. What I am saying is we could have had a contingency plan, a diplomatic one in this case, which would not have been published beforehand. It would not in any way have been "We will come to your aid if you arise." The hypothetical case I was giving was the equivalent of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956.

If we had had any totally nonmilitary, nonthreatening offer to the Russians, why one thinks something might have come of it is precisely that even then the Politburo seems to have been divided on whether to attack the country or not. They were severely shaken. They didn't know whether, in fact, to let Hungary go or not.

Our information is not totally solid on this, but it does appear that at one point the Politburo was more or less just being hustled by events.

If, for example, we had seized the diplomatic initiative with an offer to demilitarize all Central Europe, it might just possibly have shifted the Politburo. But (whether that particular suggestion is the right one or not) we were simply unready.

What I mean is, we ought to have something planned for every possible circumstance in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

THE QUESTION OF CHINA

Senator STEVENS. To what extent do you think the role of China is today affecting our relationships with Russia? And what should we do, if anything, to assist this development of an influence of a third party in our relationships?

Mr. CONQUEST. This is asking me to give answers on high policy rather than saying what are the elements involved.

Senator STEVENS. I am not asking really for advice as to what the Government should do, but what relationship does this third party, China, have in your opinion to our present relationships with Russia?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think it is of major importance in that the Russian leadership is now far more concerned with China and, I think, is trying to clear its western flank, to some extent. Obviously, advantage can be taken of that. Your subcommittee's pamphlet of selected writings on "The Soviet Approach to Negotiation" makes it clear how you can do that in principle. If the Russians behave with moderate sense, they should want a détente with the West at the moment.

The difficulty is that the Russians have been showing, or implying strongly, that they are not prepared to take this logical step, unless compelled to. For example, they have been putting out propaganda saying that China and Israel are accomplices.

If this sort of thing really means that they are not prepared to make some sort of a détente arrangement in the most sensitive area, the Middle East, clearly that is bad. If they are simply prepared to do no more than a largely formal thing at the arms control talks initiated at Helsinki, then they are showing their general incapacity to make the big move when it is necessary.

But on the other question, I think China does come in. The anti-Chinese line is extremely popular in Russia, much more so than the anti-Western line. The Russian people (and this again is the general impression of all observers), has never had much antagonism toward the West, but has a terrific fear and horror of China at present.

There is that political side of it.

On policy, I have read intelligent commentators who urge that it is contrary to the rules of international politics for the West to think in terms of allying itself with Russia against China. This argument would run that they are both inherently hostile, and you ally yourself with the weaker of your opponents against the stronger.

Theoretically speaking, a détente with China is more to our interest than one with Russia. But I would have thought that that ignored the whole difficulties of democratic policymaking. You can't switch.

Senator RIBICOFF. Why not?

Recently, a critique of American foreign policy by John Paton Davies was printed in the *New York Times Magazine* (December 7, 1969). He described how, over the last 20 or 30 years, we were always playing with the stronger power instead of playing with the weaker,

when we should have played with the weaker to achieve a balance of power that we could manipulate. John Davies has had his bumps, but I think he is a brilliant man. It was a very fascinating critique of American foreign policy in the last 20 or 30 years.

We have missed opportunity after opportunity to carry out a true balance of power policy to strengthen the United States position. Consequently, by failing to do it, we have gotten into one stew after another and we have weakened ourselves instead of strengthening ourselves.

Mr. CONQUEST. I wouldn't deny the policy. In fact, I was saying it sounded a sound policy. I was thinking of the difficulties of changing the whole opinion within the democratic society. Stalin could just change from one side to the other. You have to get your public support.

The other thing, of course, which you get in a democracy, and perhaps particularly in America, is a tendency to feel all one's allies must be frightfully nice, so might it not be the case that you could only get your swing to support for China by persuading everybody that China is marvelous?

Senator RIBICOFF. I don't think it is that. We know Vietnam isn't nice; China isn't nice; the Soviet Union isn't nice. But, basically, the purpose of a nation is to preserve its own position in the world, to make sure that it is not weakened vis-à-vis its potential enemies.

Because you are a democracy, do you have to be a bungler? Do democracies have to be fooled? Can't democracies be in a position where they look out for their best interests?

Suppose a President told the American people the truth about what the United States best interests were and pointed out to the American people what the facts were, what the conditions were, and why it was being done. Do we have to kid the American people along to do what is for the basic interests of the United States?

Mr. CONQUEST. I am glad to say that is your problem, not mine.

Senator RIBICOFF. The English have the same problem.

If the Soviet Union leadership is third-rate, what is the leadership of the West? You said second-rate. Basically, this is what bothers me. In other words, is it a question of second and third-rate people constantly stumbling into situations that lead to holocaust or can lead to a weakening of one's own country and its involvement?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think all statesmen make mistakes, even the first-rate. You can probably think of an exception, but in this century I can't think of a single country that has not made major mistakes every two or three years. There is a difference, though, in the quality of the mistakes and the ability to see how to get out of them at the other end. I wouldn't want to dispute with you at all about the essence of the theoretical possibilities involved.

To take an example, when we were allied with Russia against the Germans, we couldn't say, "It just happens to be to our interest to ally ourselves with these people." The whole emotional commitment had to be to the Russian people fighting the Germans, and to that splendid Uncle Joe Stalin with his pipe and his democratic principles.

That was fine. But it led to about five or ten years of misunderstanding afterwards. Assuming an alliance with China for now was sound policy and possible policy, could you say to the American people,

"They are our enemies in principle and if Russia is blocked they will turn on us. Nevertheless, we are going to ally ourselves with them"?

It is a difficult problem.

Senator RIBICOFF. In other words, you doubt that the people of any country are intelligent enough to realize that any nation's foreign policy has as its basic precept a nation's own interests, and you think that no people are intelligent enough to be able to be told the truth as to what a nation's policy must be for its own preservation—even if you have to play with a bastard once in a while.

Do we always have to paint our allies as angels and our enemies as devils? Can't we ever just recognize the realities of the world?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think we can, but I think it automatically goes that way once you are allied with people.

Senator RIBICOFF. Germany and Japan were not so many years ago our bitter antagonists, and the future existence of the United States depended on defeating Germany and Japan. Today, Germany and Japan are the bastions of American policy in the West and in the Far East. It wasn't very difficult to shift American attitudes and provide the assistance to Japan and Germany to build up these two countries.

Today, the worst thing that could happen to the United States would be for Russia and China to combine at any given time on a coordinate, consistent policy against the United States. This would really put the crunch on us.

We now have a situation in which it is to the interest of the United States to keep Russia and China separated or antagonistic, because it makes our position a lot easier. If we are going to have a foreign policy that provides for the preservation of our own country for posterity—which is the basic obligation of a President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense—we have to make the determination as to where our own nation comes out best.

In doing this, I wonder whether we always have to paint the scoundrel as a good guy?

THE BASIC PROBLEM

Mr. CONQUEST. The long-term interests of the United States, of the West—the short-term interest is clearly avoiding an atomic war or anything like that—the long-term interest, as I would put it, is bringing the Communist states, bringing them back to civilization, leading them to end their siege policy and siege economy, particularly on thought—without, in principle, their abandoning their particular social attitudes.

But behind that again is the question of the totally different cultures now involved. There is a great deal of talk, for example, from Professor John Kenneth Galbraith and others about convergence—because they have factories and we have factories and that sort of thing. It strikes me this is extraordinarily superficial. It is not based on anything going on in Russia. It has no bearing on what the Russian civic-political-cultural reality is. These theorists are rather like those people in Europe who used to say before 1933 that you could not have fascism in highly industrialized countries. You found it in the underdeveloped areas—in Italy, in the Balkans. But they said it couldn't happen in Germany because the Germans had such industry and education. But it happened.

This semi-economic determinism, it seems to me, is pure nonsense. Such views incidentally, are, to some extent, coordinate with the views of some American or Western scientists who think that Russian scientists they know are also critical of the Soviets, so that scientists there and scientists here can all pull together and produce a détente that way. But their scientists have no political effect whatever. The whole situation is different.

If I may, I would like to quote not a political scientist or ordinary scientist but a poet—an extraordinarily, perceptive remark by T. S. Eliot. He introduced a book of labor camp memoirs in 1946, *The Dark Side of the Moon*. He said, "We are in fact in a period of conflict between cultures—a conflict which finds the older cultures in a position of disadvantage: from lack of confidence in themselves, from divisions both internal and between each other, from the inheritance of old abuses from the past aggravated by abuses due to the hasty introduction of novelties . . . The Liberal . . . assumes . . . that the cultural conflict is one which can, like political conflict, be adjusted by compromise, or like the religious conflict, be resolved by tolerance."

But, Eliot adds, "The . . . attempt . . . to find a political solution to what is not merely a political problem can . . . only lead to temporary . . . benefits unless the deeper problem is faced and pondered. . . . A politician or an economist who can appreciate this problem is a very exceptional man, possessed of a wisdom springing from another source than his political acumen and experience, or his scientific learning and ingenuity."

I think Eliot has stated the basic problem here. Although I was speaking in terms of the long range, it does also affect our short-range thinking, to recognize that these are the representatives of a totally different culture.

DON'TS ON DEALING WITH RUSSIA

Senator RIBICOFF. Along that line, back in the winter of 1946 George Kennan proposed some rules to govern our dealings with the Russians. His short piece is reprinted in the subcommittee's print, "The Soviet Approach to Negotiation: Selected Writings." Many of George Kennan's rules are "don'ts".

What basic suggestions to govern our dealings with Moscow would you make? In other words, what would you put on a list of "don'ts"?

Mr. CONQUEST. I agree with George Kennan's suggestions in that paper virtually entirely. As I said, not blurring our basic intentions—

Senator RIBICOFF. You would agree with Senator Baker that because you are dealing with third-rate minds you should be very simple and clear in what your intentions are?

Mr. CONQUEST. Within the possibilities.

Another point I think that Kennan makes, if not in quite this form, is not to give in on little things. A small example that occurs to me is when Professor Barghoorn was arrested in Moscow and President Kennedy simply refused to discuss the matter and threatened an immediate break on cultural relations unless they let him out. They let him out.

Senator RIBICOFF. In other words, the shape of a table becomes an important thing in dealing with the Soviet Union.

Mr. CONQUEST. Yes; and absolute firmness.

There are other cases. We in Britain mishandled in an opposite way the Gerald Brooke case (when a young British lecturer was arrested there for taking in anti-Soviet propaganda), by maintaining friendly contacts, welcoming Kosygin to London, and so forth.

Senator RIBICOFF. In other words, you recommend a policy of firmness, as opposed to a policy of conciliation?

Mr. CONQUEST. Well, these are small things. They don't resent it. The question of resenting hardly arises. From their point of view, everything is political. If you give them something, they take it, but they are not grateful for it.

A recent case was that of Anatole Shub of the *Washington Post*. I thought that was handled right. When he was expelled from Moscow, you quietly expelled a Soviet correspondent. As a result, they let back the next *Washington Post* man immediately.

This is only small stuff, but I am convinced that the English handling of the Brooke case had a permanent bad effect on their feeling of what they could get away with with the British. A small case, but with quite significant results, in fact.

This is simply a development of George Kennan's points, in fact.

IMPACT OF THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Senator GURNEY. It seems to me that over the years we have taken quite a pummeling from world opinion as a result of our situation in Vietnam.

What has been the reaction of opinion makers in Western Europe—news media, newspaper editors, other people who have an effect on public opinion—to the Russian-Czechoslovak venture? Have the Soviets been criticized periodically since, or only at the time of the invasion?

Mr. CONQUEST. I think the effect in Britain, and I think in all other Western Europe, was far greater than the United States. I was here some months after the invasion and I was astonished at the comparative American apathy, on all political wings. A similar complaint was made by a very left-wing English professor at Berkeley.

It was very astonishing. I think if you had been following the British press on this issue, it was a terrific thing, again right out to the extreme left. Even the Communist Party strongly attacked the Russians. It was a very, very heavy issue, far more important than Vietnam.

Senator GURNEY. Has that criticism continued in European papers periodically or daily?

Mr. CONQUEST. Whenever anything comes up, and things are always coming up. There is always a new purging from the Czechoslovak Central Committee, for example, and the criticism comes up every time.

It is partly, I suppose, because we are nearer.

Senator GURNEY. I am glad to hear that. I agree with you that our own reaction has been minimal, to say the least. I am glad to have heard what you had to say.

Mr. CONQUEST. The British Communist Party just had a Congress and voted by about two to one in supporting their Executive in continuing to call for the withdrawal of Russian troops. The Italian Communists too. The French Communist poet Louis Aragon has just had a long article saying that a recent instruction by the Minister of Education in Prague, which virtually calls for all professors to denounce

their students and everybody else, was actually worse than the invasion itself. These do keep the pot at the boiling point continually.

Senator GURNEY. Thank you.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP

Senator STEVENS. Given your analysis of the third-rate Soviet leadership, wouldn't the eye-for-an-eye concept reduce our diplomatic policies and actions to their level? If we are to expel one of their people because they expel one of ours, if we are to send our fleet to the Black Sea because they bring theirs out there, or to the Indian Ocean because they put theirs there, aren't we in effect saying American diplomacy can't rise above their level?

Mr. CONQUEST. I suppose yes, in a sense, but it is a matter of doing the things they understand. If you are talking with people who only talk in monosyllables, you talk in monosyllables.

Senator BAKER. May I put a question at this point?

This is not meant as a criticism of the witness or his testimony, which has been most stimulating. Isn't the underlying basis of these questions and these answers descriptive of the parent-child relationship or the adult-juvenile relationship? We assume that the United States and the Western World is superior, chronologically or otherwise, to the Russians or the non-Western powers. (I classify Russia in this sense as a non-Western power.) Therefore, we take almost a patronizing attitude in our foreign policy formulation—speak in words of one syllable, transmit our intentions so that they will be understood by a third-rate leadership, and so on.

I am wondering if that isn't the basic flaw in the relationships between the East and the West, regardless of the fact that the intellectual level of Soviet leadership may be inferior by our standards.

The leadership of a nation is a broth consisting of intellectualism, emotionalism and animal instincts. When these three elements are combined, I am not really sure that the Russian leadership is inferior to Western leadership, and I am not really sure that the results of that leadership in terms of material gains or in terms of the fulfillment of the first requirement of nationalism, that is, self-preservation, as Senator Ribicoff pointed out, has been less successful than Western leadership.

I wonder if this whole theory doesn't end up in a self-critical posture, and if we don't have to re-examine the prospect of the proposition that Russian leadership is, in fact, third-rate, or at least one order of magnitude inferior to Western leadership.

Mr. CONQUEST. In one sense it is a more basic thing than the degeneration of the Soviet leadership to the present level.

Even under Stalin, Litvinov, when he was removed from the Foreign Ministry, went around—at great risk to himself—telling Western diplomats and journalists that the Politburo knew nothing about the West. I would have thought there was a basic answer about the whole polity: and that is that it is a completely closed polity. They do not admit other ideas.

The leadership does see summaries of the West's views in the Western press, and their secret or semi-secret circulars. But clearly, by their actions, they are unable to understand or to try and grasp the

meaning of not simply non-Communist countries but even of Communist countries which aren't precisely their type.

They were on record last year in an editorial in the Party journal *Pravda* that there can be no "other socialism", just the type developed in the Soviet Union and certain subordinate countries. They are not like ourselves. The notion that we are strictly parallel seems to be a false one. We do not have dogmas in the same sense.

America does not regard not merely all Communist countries but all other democratic countries or other capitalist economies as illegitimate if not precisely on the American model. You don't think England is no good because we are a monarchy or because we have some socialized industries.

I don't think the parallel is a sound one. One doesn't have to claim that we are Utopias to take the view that we are on the higher level of political civilization, not only in the present situation but in the previous situations.

I would go along if you say there is a potential for evolution in Communist countries in general. Czechoslovakia might have evolved a civilized Communism—that is to say maintaining the essentials of the economy, and even Party control, but allowing the free flow of ideas and thought.

Senator BAKER. I think, then, the distinction you are making is a different one. That is the distinction between first, second or third-rate civilized leadership versus first, second or third-rate leadership in terms of its effectiveness to preserve a position or the integrity of a nation as such. There is a difference between the two.

I would agree with you that you could make a much stronger case that Soviet leadership is much less civilized than Western leadership, but I want to emphasize that I don't know that Soviet leadership has been less effective in maintaining Soviet integrity as a nation than Western leadership. It really goes to the question of what we are describing, civilization or capacity to maintain the national entity.

I am not sure that you can postulate an American foreign policy on the assumption that Soviet leadership is at least one order of magnitude less civilized or less effective or less intelligent than American or British leadership.

Mr. CONQUEST. The essential, I would agree with you, is not in any comparing or scoring we do, so much as in getting a sound view of their level of leadership—not so much saying that they are stupid or less clever than us, but seeing what is their operational level of short-sightedness and capacity to blunder and so forth—and we can improve our own intellectual and political grasp by knowing what they are like. We can create in our minds a clear notion of what this group of leaders is like.

Perhaps it is difficult anyhow to develop exactly, to characterize them in too precise terms. But I would repeat, as an important and widely held and substantiated view that they are a narrow-minded lot, brought up in very traditional, narrow thinking and shortsighted within that tradition.

George Orwell remarked about the early Bolsheviks—I think Bernard Shaw was saying that Winston Churchill didn't really believe they were demons; they were really just rational men building a new system—Orwell comments, "The early Bolsheviks may have been an-

gels or demons according as one chooses to regard them, but, at any rate, they were not sensible men."

They are still not sensible men, even though they are no longer angels or demons. They are trolls, if you like. Heavy, lumbering types, without being sensible men, having lost their angelic or demonic urge. There is this fantastic narrowness about them.

Senator BAKER. That reminds me of Lincoln's commentary on Grant's drinking. If anybody commented that General Grant drank a great deal and should be reprimanded, Lincoln said, "If this is the secret of his success, I intend to convert all of my Generals into drunkards."

So, any way you look at it, whether narrow, third-rate, intellectually inferior, clever, stupid, whatever, the fact remains that they have had an astonishing growth in material wealth and accomplishments. I don't think anyone would argue that the Soviet Union is less secure as a national entity now than it was at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution.

On that basis, I once again challenge the underlying assumption that we should deal with the Russians as inferior leaders from an intellectual standpoint.

Mr. CONQUEST. We are speaking of the present leadership—1964–1969—and their triumphs have not really been great. As you have said, they have preserved their position in Czechoslovakia at a cost of great political defeats in certain ways. They got themselves involved in China. They have enemies on both fronts. They have lost the entire equipment of an army in the Sinai Desert. And so on.

FUTURE SOVIET LEADERS?

Senator RIBICOFF. It may just be proof if a nation has basic strength and power they can survive and go ahead no matter how stupid their leaders may be. In other words, stupid leadership can't destroy, basically, in the short run, a powerful nation.

Where does Russian leadership go from this present level? These men will not stay forever. Who is waiting to come up? What kind of man?

Mr. CONQUEST. This is the other unfortunate thing. As far as one can see, there is no one at the level below of a different or superior type.

I think you would agree since the Russian Revolution the standard of leadership has gone down rapidly: Lenin, Stalin, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev. This is the great difficulty.

There are several possible views of the potential evolution. M. Michel Tatu is one of the most interesting and best-informed men in the world on the subject. He thinks there are possibilities of almost anything in the next five years, military coups, disintegration, things of that sort.

On the other hand, I would say as part of the answer that the machine Stalin built, the Party apparatus and the state machine, is immensely strong. It is inappropriate to the intellectual forces in the country, but holds them in because it is so tough.

Marx's view was that every political and social system is appropriate to a certain level of production and thought, and then becomes inappropriate, and then bursts in revolutionary fashion. But Marx never really dealt with a state, a political system, so strong. After all, what

Stalin did in the '30s was he created a machine capable of taking on and defeating the economic forces. This is what collectivization of the land amounted to. It is an immensely powerful machine, built by a man of horrible genius. They do have these levers. Internal power is more important to them than anything else, the maintenance of their power. They do have those advantages. You can be a bad driver of a 90-ton tank and if you hit a small car you will not do yourself much harm.

So, though the potential for radical change is present in Russian society, there is a very tough obstacle before it.

ANALYSTS OF RUSSIAN AFFAIRS

Senator RIBICOFF. Who do you consider the most perceptive present analysts in open literature of Russian political history and Soviet political leadership and methods?

Mr. CONQUEST. I would mention two or three useful contributions. The best book on recent politics is Michel Tatu's *Power in the Kremlin*. Anatole Shub's book when it comes out, which is based on his recent articles, will certainly show a great deal about the leadership and the people.

There are commentators who have not produced books, like Tibor Szamuely of the London *Spectator*, whose comments almost invariably are very shrewd. And one must not forget the pieces by Professor Richard Lowenthal.

On the more general background Leonard Schapiro's *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, and Adam Ulam's *Lenin and the Bolsheviks*, occur to me.

And to get the feeling of the Party apparatus' mental background, there is striking stuff in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's splendid novel *The First Circle*, for example.

POSITION OF SCIENTISTS IN SOVIET UNION

Senator BAKER. Do you foresee the prospect that any part of the scientific community, especially the younger group, is likely to emerge in leadership positions?

Mr. CONQUEST. Well, in effect, they can't, politically, through the present machinery. If you mean do I think it possible that big upsets may take place, I would take the view that Tatu is right, that anything is at least possible. The present situation in principle is unstable. But it has this immense built-in strength unless one of two things happens: One, that there is a more or less accidental political crisis at the top, one of these faction fights that splits the whole thing up and gives the opportunity for new forces to emerge, not from within the Party machine but from the non-machine membership. Or some big crisis in foreign affairs or the economy which would again produce the tensions necessary to disrupt that machine. These disruptions have taken place in other Communist countries—Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It was much easier in those countries: Their machines were never entirely staffed by the traditionalists. But, nevertheless, without such a disruption I can't see the possibility of any scientists playing any role—even assuming that all scientists are true progressive activists.

Senator RIBICOFF. Generally, scientists, world-wide are apolitical. The scientist is interested in his work. Most scientists could care less about a political system or a political philosophy.

Senator BAKER. As long as they are left alone.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP?

Senator GURNEY. One question on the next generation of leadership. I certainly understand it is a rigid, conformist group. But what about their intellectual capacities? Are we perhaps faced in coming generations with more clever and more capable leaders than the present ones?

Mr. CONQUEST. There is always this cleverness in getting on. A man who gets to the top must at least be capable of the in-fighting. He is adept at some things. He may be a pug, but he is good at his pugging.

Senator GURNEY. But I mean, are they pretty good intellectually?

Mr. CONQUEST. I would say they are going to be probably better educated in a technical sense.

Senator GURNEY. Would they be top students in their universities? That is what I am asking.

Mr. CONQUEST. They would have a better education. You have probably met some of the Russians in the diplomatic or foreign press circles—that is very peripheral, but still, in the establishment. They seem a bit skeptical, they have a certain air of feeling that something should be done to change the Soviet situation. After all, Khrushchev had this. He didn't know what should be done, and he changed all sorts of things. And what he did change has mostly changed back again.

So far in Russia, all reform, virtually speaking, even under the Czars, has been put through by a strong man at the top against the will of his apparatus. The liberation for serfs by Alexander II, for example. Or Peter the Great's reforms.

THE FALL OF KHRUSHCHEV

Senator RIBICOFF. How did they topple Khrushchev and why wasn't he liquidated, but allowed to live? This always fascinated me. This seems to be contrary to precedent in the Soviet Union.

Mr. CONQUEST. He didn't liquidate the previous lot, the Malenkov-Molotov lot.

Senator RIBICOFF. But what were the immediate circumstances surrounding his removal from leadership, while still keeping him alive?

Mr. CONQUEST. It is a long story. In effect, it was a matter of getting together a majority behind his back.

Senator RIBICOFF. With their equivalent of the Secret Service, which he must have controlled, wasn't he aware of what was going on? How could they do this without him being aware?

Mr. CONQUEST. This is a mystery.

Senator RIBICOFF. How could they get away with that type of conspiracy in a dictatorship?

Mr. CONQUEST. He wasn't ever totally in control. He never threw all the men not devoted to him or dependent on him out of the Presidency, though I think he was planning to do so at about this point.

Senator RIBICOFF. Is that why they did it to him before he did it to them?

Mr. CONQUEST. Yes. They also objected to most of his policies. But how it happened, how the people who were against him, who were known to be against him, got on to the others and sounded them out, whether they struck when they had just a majority or recruited the whole Presidium, this we don't know.

Senator RIBICOFF. That story has never come out. If it has, I have never come across it.

Mr. CONQUEST. What is known about it has been written up. There are books, though perhaps not totally sound ones. We don't really know the details.

Senator GURNEY. Did Khrushchev try to de-Stalinize the country to build himself up as a political leader?

Mr. CONQUEST. Partly, because it was a splendid weapon against all the other competitors immediately after Stalin's death. But he is on record as saying he wished to destroy Stalin before he died—before he "croaked," was his expression. He took the view that Russia needed a major change and the true story of the Stalin era. I regard this in some ways as perhaps the basic test of these present people. Until they tell the truth about their own history, they are blocked into an intellectual impasse.

Khrushchev was beginning to tell the truth, a great deal was being told, but not all. They have never, for example, repudiated the great trials. They rehabilitated six or seven of those accused, but have never said the trials were fixed.

Stalin had a story—a false one, but at least a coherent one. Now they don't have a story at all, true or false.

Senator GURNEY. As you say, Khrushchev started to debunk Stalin, but didn't quite succeed. Why did the new leaders seem to return to Stalin as the Soviet hero? Why didn't they move on and create their own political heroes? Most politicians would try to do that.

Mr. CONQUEST. I think Khrushchev's initiative against Stalin was very much himself and a few of his own people, and he imposed it on the Party. At that time, you got all sorts of people writing against Stalin who nowadays are writing his praises. This is one weakness of the machine. If the man at the top decides something, there are also a lot of second rankers who will go along with whatever it is. This gave him his leverage. They depended on him for their jobs. They don't really have convictions, you might say.

On the other hand, to overthrow Khrushchev they relied on the people who never got along with anti-Stalinism, never liked it. It was a rallying around, to some extent, on a pro-Stalin basis.

To reform Russia, to open their minds, they must repudiate the past. This, I am sure, applies to things like collectivization. How can they stop it? They killed five million peasants. They have their own records and the records of the Party, like a moral albatross around their necks. It is not only an intellectual but a moral effort beyond almost anybody's capacity to say that this was just a mistake. Until they do, they are faced with this totally inefficient agriculture. And this is a typical blockage.

Senator RIBICOFF. We could stay with you all day, Mr. Conquest, but we have action on the Senate floor and now we must go there.

In behalf of Senator Jackson, I want to thank you for giving of your time to come here and share your thoughts with us.

You have been very generous and stimulating. I want to thank you on behalf of the entire committee.

Mr. CONQUEST. Thank you, Senator. I hope I have been of some use.

Senator RIBICOFF. The committee will recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

(Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.)

BIOGRAPHY

ROBERT CONQUEST

Poet, novelist, editor and scholar, Robert Conquest is perhaps best known for his extensive writings on Soviet affairs. His works have included the following: *Common Sense About Russia* (1960); *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (1960); *Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R.* (1961); *Courage of Genius: The Pasternak Affair* (1961); *The Last Empire* (1962); *The Future of Communism* (1963); *Marxism Today* (1964); *The Soviet Succession Problem* (1964); and *Russia After Khrushchev* (1965). A *New York Times* book review described Mr. Conquest's most recent book, *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (1968), as "the most complete, responsible and generally accessible account, outside the Kremlin archives, of one of the most ruthless campaigns of slaughter in history."

Since 1967, Mr. Conquest has also been the editor of *The Contemporary Soviet Union Series: Institutions and Policies*, published by Frederick A. Praeger, New York. Each volume examines in detail an important aspect of Soviet rule in the years since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The completed volumes of the series include: *The Politics of Ideas in the USSR*; *Industrial Workers in the USSR*; *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice*; *Agricultural Workers in the USSR*; *The Soviet Political System*; *Religion in the USSR*; *The Soviet Police System*; and *Justice and the Legal System in the USSR*.

Mr. Conquest was born in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, on July 15, 1917. After studying at Winchester College (1931-35) and the University of Grenoble, France (1935-36), he attended Magdalen College, Oxford, and received a B.A. degree in 1939. During World War II he served with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, attaining the rank of captain. In 1950 he was a member of the British Delegation to the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Conquest was a research fellow on Soviet affairs at the London School of Economics and Political Science (1956-58). During 1959-60 he was a visiting professor in the English Department of the State University of New York at Buffalo. After serving for two years as the literary editor of *The Spectator* in London (1962-63), Mr. Conquest returned to the United States as a senior fellow of Columbia University's Research Institute on Communist Affairs (1964-65).

Mr. Conquest has also written two novels, *A World of Difference* (1955) and *The Egyptologists* (co-authored with Kingsley Amis in 1965). In addition to producing at least two books of poetry, *Poems* (1955) and *Between Mars and Venus* (1962), Mr. Conquest has edited a number of literary anthologies, including: *New Poems: A P.E.N. Anthology* (1953); *New Lines* (1956); *Back to Life: Poems From Behind the Iron Curtain* (1958); *New Lines 2* (1963); and, with Kingsley Amis, *Spectrum: A Science Fiction Anthology* (annual since 1961).

Mr. Conquest's literary awards include a P.E.N. (an international writers' club) prize for a long poem (1949) and the Festival of Britain verse prize (1951). He is an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.).

